

ABSTRACT OF THE INVENTION

A reporting engine for generating customized reports from relational data stored in a database. Metadata associated with the data in the database describes the data according to one or more characteristics of the data. One or more of tables organizing the metadata is exposed as a dimension having at least one column of attributes. The reporting engine compares search criteria, specified by a request from a user, to the metadata attributes, and executes a predefined procedure for retrieving selected data from the database. The procedure constructs a query as a function of the comparison between the search criteria and the metadata attributes for implementing the query to optimize retrieval of the selected data from the database. Other aspects of the invention are directed to computer-readable media for use in connection with the reporting engine.